

Institute of Government Benchmarking Study

Background

During the fall of 1995, questions concerning performance measures were raised. Can local governments measure their performance and service cost in a meaningful way? Can performance measures in one local government be legitimately compared to the performance of another? In hopes of gathering information to answer these questions fourteen cities participated in a performance measurement-benchmarking study conducted by the Institute of Government. Listed below are the fourteen cities that are included in this report:

- Asheville
- Cary
- Chapel Hill
- Charlotte
- Durham
- Garner
- Greensboro
- Hickory
- Raleigh
- Salisbury
- Shelby
- Wilmington
- Wilson
- Winston-Salem

Report Objectives

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to identify and highlight the City of Greensboro's performance among several service areas presented in a Benchmarking Study conducted by the Institute of Government.

- To identify service areas where the City outperformed other participating units.
- To identify service areas where the City is lagging in performance compared to other jurisdictions.
- To identify production and efficiency of service.

Services

The areas of service that were studied by the Institute of Government were:

- Residential refuse collection
- Household recycling
- Yard waste/leaf collection
- Police patrol
- Police investigation
- Emergency communication
- Street pavement maintenance
- Fire services

The report includes performance and cost data information from the fiscal year 1998-99 for the fourteen participants. Ten of the cities that are participating in this study, including Asheville, Cary, Durham, Greensboro, Hickory, Raleigh, Salisbury, Wilmington, Wilson, and Winston-Salem, also participated in the Final Report on City Service for Fiscal Year 1997-98.

Summary of Overall Results

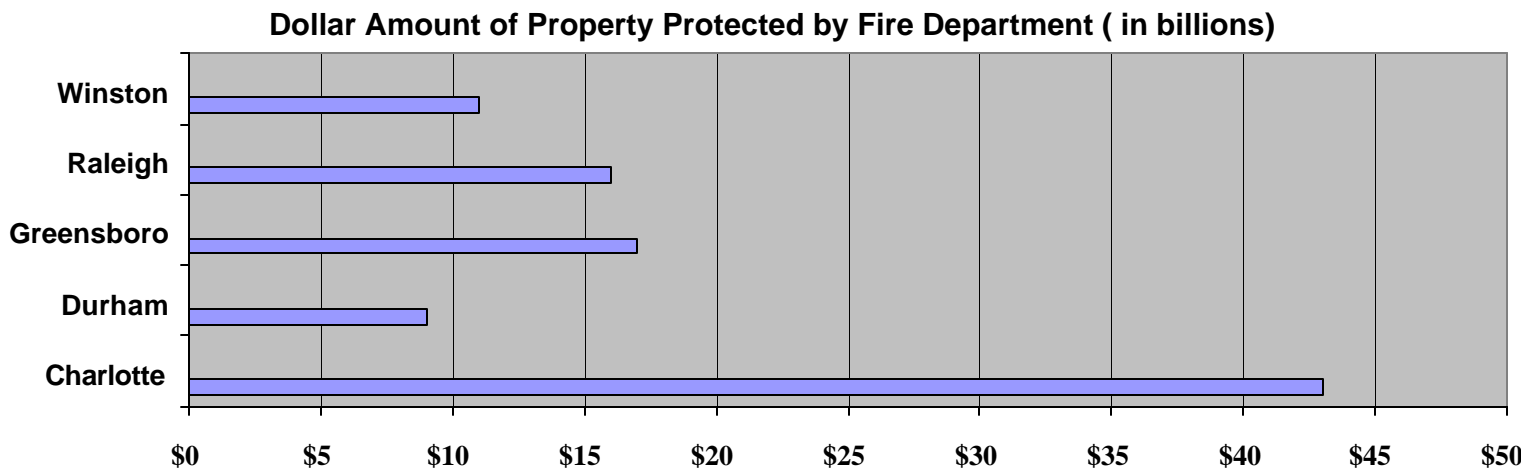
Among the eight services included in this report the City of Greensboro showed good performance in certain dimensions of the areas of Fire Service, Household Recycling, Residential Refuse Collection, and Yard Waste/Leaf Collection. The summaries below will give a more in-depth analysis of the performance of the City in the areas mentioned above.

Fire Services

The City of Greensboro Fire Department is one of the participating units that provide the best possible service in the most cost-effective manner. The response time, the ISO rating, and the amount of property protected are all factors identified that show the quality of service provided by the Greensboro Fire Department. The Insurance Service Office (ISO) is responsible for reviewing and rating municipal fire departments, water systems, and communication systems. The ratings that a municipality receives from ISO determine what City homeowners and businesses pay in insurance premiums. The average ISO rating for the participating units is three. The City of Greensboro ISO rating is one and is the best among the other jurisdictions. In addition, the dollar amount of property protected in the City is second only to that of Charlotte. Also, in the area of inspections, the City completed more inspections per inspector full time equivalent position (FTE) than most of the other units participating in the survey.

Fire Service Chart

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem
Response Time/min.	4.2	4.0	4.5	4.5	3.2
ISO Rating	3	3	1	3	3
Inspections Completed/FTE	1,396	803	955	588	N/A
Property Protected	\$43,477,753,413	\$9,000,000,000	\$16,901,609,370	\$16,528,855,986	\$11,378,633,502



Household Recycling Program

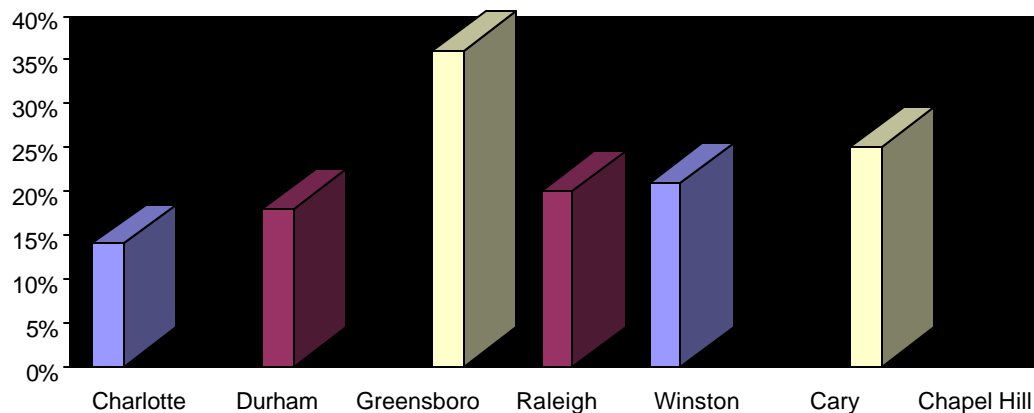
The second area of service that the City of Greensboro seems to perform well in is the Household Recycling Program. City officials' commitment to recycling, number of drop-off centers, and type of items eligible for recycling are factors that affect household recycling performance and cost. The total tons collected per full time equivalent position for Greensboro is the highest among the participating units. The level of performance by the City is directly correlated with the level of automation used to collect recyclables. In addition, the City has the highest number of drop-off sites than any other participating unit. The City is one of only three cities participating in the project (Cary, Greensboro, and Raleigh) that does not contract any portion of its recycling program.

While the City's performance in the area of production far exceeds any other participating unit, the cost of the program for what it provides to the citizens of Greensboro is very reasonable compared to other jurisdictions. For example, the cost per collection point is less expensive than most of the major cities (Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte and Cary). Also the tons of household recyclable materials collected as a percentage of the sum of tons of residential refuse collected is among the best of any other units in this report. This assesses the magnitude and effectiveness of household recycling in relation to residential refuse collected for disposal. The City's program diverts more residential refuse from the disposal stream at a feasible cost. See chart below.

Household Recycling

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem	Cary	Chapel Hill
Tons Collected per FTE	564	Contract	2,134	442	Contract	249	N/A
Cost/Ton Collected	\$151	\$206	\$63	\$140	\$122	\$200	\$163
Drop-off sites	0	N/A	14	7	9	1	10
% of Residential Refuse Recycled	14%	18%	36%	20%	21%	25%	N/A
Cost of Program	\$3,735,505	\$1,835,936	\$1,760,726	\$2,043,188	\$1,366,288	\$1,337,431	\$1,459,623

Percentage of Residential Refuse Recycled

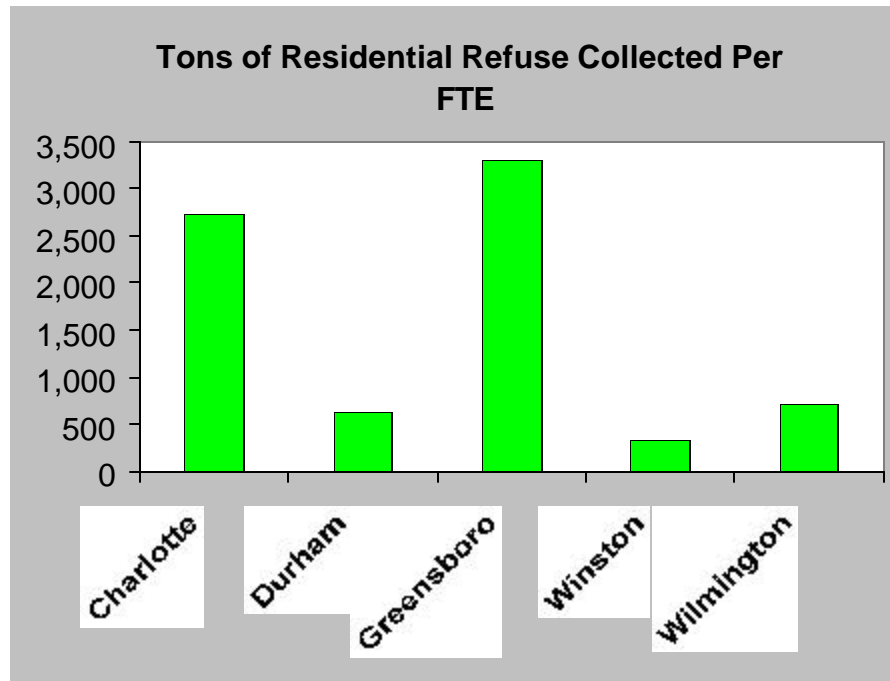


Residential Refuse Collection

A third area of service that the City seems to be doing well in is the Residential Refuse Collection Program. The total tons collected is the second highest among the participating units. The reason for this is the City of Charlotte has a higher number of residential customers. However, the City far exceeds Charlotte and any other unit in tons collected per FTE. The utilization of fully automated vehicles is a notable aspect of the City's residential refuse program. In the area of tons collected per FTE the City program is one of the most efficient and effective programs based on the study. See chart below.

Residential Refuse Collection

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Winston-Salem	Wilmington
Tons Collected/FTE	2,741	621	3,309	334	706
Cost/Ton Collected	\$36	\$104	\$64	\$129	\$96



Yard Waste/Leaf Collection

The last area of service that the City of Greensboro is performing well in is The Yard Waste/Leaf Collection Program. Among the major cities included in this study (Charlotte, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem), the City of Greensboro has one of the most efficient programs in terms of production and cost. Tons collected per FTE are the best among all participating units. In addition, the cost per ton collected is less expensive with more production than the other major units. The reason for this is that the City collects during the months of October through January, whereas most of the participating units collect between October and November. Complaints resolved in the same day in terms of percentage ranks 3rd among other units.

Yard Waste/Leaf Collection

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem
Tons Collected/FTE	392	650	828	369	357
Cost/Ton Collected	\$104	\$130	\$64	\$151	\$118
% of Complaints resolved in same working day	95%	100%	99%	100%	N/A

Other Services

Police Investigations, Police Patrol, Emergency Communication, and Street Pavement Maintenance are other areas of service that the City provides, but could improve in some aspects of the service, based on the survey results.

Police Investigation

The areas of Police Investigation where service can be enhanced are in the areas of crimes cleared relative to those reported. Based on the survey, the City's clearing rate falls among the other major units in this study. The average clearing rate in this study is 22%, in which the City is slightly below at 21.7%. This is reasonably good based on the study. In addition, each jurisdiction must have a code of uniform crime report that lists every crime in a specific category. The cost per uniform crime reported cleared by investigation for the City is less expensive than other units in this study. The reason for this is based on the number of crimes cleared. The more crimes cleared, the less expensive the cost per uniform crime report.

Police Investigation

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem	Garner
Cost/UCR cleared by investigation	\$9,100	\$6,836	\$2,111	N/A	\$6,104	\$3,915
% of Crimes Cleared of those reported	18.8%	10.2%	21.7%	26.0%	28.3%	29.4%

Police Patrol

The factors that affect the area of Police Patrol are emphasis on quick response to all calls, community policing policies, and the demographic makeup of the community. The area of response to calls is one aspect of the service that the City is performing below average as compared to other surveyed cities. The average response time to high priority calls for most of the units are about 4.2 minutes. The City's response is the third highest among the participating units. Since the implementation of a new telecommunication system, the response time is now accurately tracked. Prior to the implementation of this new system, time of response was

calculated based on an estimate. In addition, incoming calls per patrol officer increased from last fiscal year, which may have some impact on the response time. The City is one of only three participating units with a cost per incoming call under \$95 based on the survey.

Police Patrol

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem
Response time/High Priority Calls	4.3	6.8	6.1	5.8	2.3
Cost/Incoming Calls	\$90	\$84	\$91	\$125	\$180

Emergency Communication

Emergency Communication is one of the most effective programs among the units included in this report. There is only one aspect of this service in which the City could use some improvement. This is in the number of seconds from initial ring to answer calls. Among the participating units, the City ranks 11th in this area. The City in terms of efficiency and production is doing better than the majority of the other units. See chart below.

Emergency Communication

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem
# of seconds from initial ring to answer	9	5	12	18	10
# of seconds from receipt of call to dispatch	N/A	58	40	121	60
Cost/Call answered	\$8.66	\$9.53	\$5.22	\$2.37	\$6.97

Street Pavement Maintenance

The last area of service that is presented in this report that identifies some dilemmas of the City's performance is Street Pavement Maintenance. Among the units that provided information pertaining to the percentage of streets rated 85 percent or better on a standard rating the City ranks 11th out of the twelve units that participated in this service. In addition, the City is only one of three units whose cost per centerline mile paved by contractor's is over \$100. The reason for the high cost is due to three factors. The first includes resurfacing contracts. With a total number of 25.33 centerline miles with multi-lanes requiring resurfacing, 23.33 centerline miles are under contract and two by city crews. Many of the other units in this study do not contract their work, which creates a lower cost, per mile.

Secondly, the measurement in this study does not account for the fact that a city may be resurfacing a 3, 4, or even 5, lane section. For example the City of Chapel Hill may resurface 15.5 miles of centerline mileage on a two-lane street that requires repair work on one lane. On the other hand the City of Greensboro may measure the same exact centerline mileage, but the street may be a three to five lane street that needs repairing on two lanes. This would create a higher cost for the City of Greensboro. In addition, many of the streets in Greensboro require a higher quantity of full depth repair, which includes manhole, valve adjustments, and wheelchair ramp installment.

The third factor could be the use of different methods of maintenance by the units involved. For example the City of Greensboro Street Maintenance Division includes total project cost (contract cost, full depth repair cost, and manhole cost) and divides it by the centerline mileage, which has some impact on the cost difference among the units. Based on the survey in the study many of the other units only included full depth repair cost which seemingly made their cost lower than that of Greensboro.

Street Pavement Maintenance

	Charlotte	Durham	Greensboro	Raleigh	Winston-Salem
Street Rated 85% or better	74%	85%	69%	71%	81%
Cost/Centerline Mile Repaved by contractors	\$38	\$62	\$123	\$48	\$69

In conclusion, no jurisdiction will perform well in all of the service areas, but overall the City of Greensboro is one of the premiere units that provides quality, efficient, and effective service to its citizens.